Dear Marshall Community,

The tragic and horrific death of George Floyd—coming on top of the equally devastating deaths of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, among many others—has had a profound effect on me, as it has on people around the world. It is essential for us all to say loudly, with conviction and resolve, Black Lives Matter. But our actions must speak louder than our words.

As the new dean of the USC Marshall School, I am committed to a diverse and inclusive teaching, learning and working environment for all our students, faculty and staff that treats everyone with dignity and respect. Universities have a unique position in society to develop leaders who will take on the profound issues of our time, not least social justice and racism. Marshall has developed some important diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, including the graduate course, “Leading with Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Business,” taught by Shaun Harper, three hours of DEI training for incoming students, and the FORWARD Summit that showcases Black and Latinx business leaders.

It is clear, however, that there is so much more for us to do. I would like to briefly outline Marshall’s priorities for the coming academic year:

- Deliver a new and innovative class, If Not You, Who?, focused on questions of leadership, with a major emphasis on building, managing and leading diverse and inclusive organizations.
- Develop new and revise existing course materials to more prominently integrate and feature Black, Latinx, Indigenous and women leaders as well as the practices and successes of diverse organizations, with a focus on minority- and women-owned and led businesses.
- Give priority to increasing the number of people of color, women and other historically underrepresented faculty so that all students can see themselves in the people who teach and inspire them.
- Produce Marshall’s Leading Voices in Business speaker series with broad representation of contributors, including speakers from underrepresented communities and women.
- Engage in consulting projects with Black-, brown- and women-owned enterprises to develop cultural awareness as a core skill set for our students. We will kick off our efforts with a partnership with the California African American Museum in Exposition Park.
- Continue Marshall’s 50-year plus collaboration with the Consortium to attract and
- Continue Marshall’s 50-year plus collaboration with the Consortium to attract and recruit Black, Latinx, Indigenous and other historically underrepresented students to Marshall’s MBA programs.
- Expand access opportunities such as the Marshall Pathways Program to attract and recruit underrepresented students to Marshall’s undergraduate programs.
- Enhance campus-wide collaborations on diversity, equity, inclusion and antiracist initiatives by partnering with various schools, administrative offices, and student-centered programs throughout the university that are engaged in this work.
- Collaborate with student leaders, including club Diversity and Equity Officers, to continue offering relevant and robust DEI and antiracism programming to educate and support all our students.

Information about these initiatives, and others, can be found on a newly updated page on Marshall’s website detailing our diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism efforts.

One of my first decisions as Dean at Marshall was to elevate the position of Associate Dean and Senior Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, held by Dr. Sharoni Little, to Vice Dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, with a mandate to drive forward all our diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism efforts. This work cannot, however, be delegated alone to Sharoni and her team, notwithstanding their expertise and dedication. Achieving our goals will require broad and deep leadership and commitment throughout the school, and I am proud to see so many people stepping up to join me in this collective effort.

Sincerely yours,

Geoff Garrett

Geoff Garrett
Dean, USC Marshall School of Business